

# Reading Toolkit: Grade 3 Objective 2.A.6.d

Standard 2.0 Comprehension of Informational Text

Topic A. Comprehension of Informational Text

Indicator 6. Read critically to evaluate informational text

Objective d. Explain whether or not the author's opinion is presented fairly

Assessment Limits:

Evidence that the author has presented all sides of the issue or topic

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## Lesson Seeds

### Reading Grade 3 Objective 2.A.6.d

#### Activities

The teacher will provide students with an informational passage where the author has a clearly defined opinion. Together teacher and students will read the assigned text and then complete a chart like the one below.

Title and Author	Author's Opinion	Ideas that Support the Author's Opinion	Ideas that are Against the Author's Opinion	Is the author's opinion presented fairly?

For student beginning this process, the teacher should provide the author's opinion.

Students will read the informational text about school dress codes "Dress Rehearsal" by Loretta Grantham in the Palm Beach Post from August 24, 1992. This article is available on the SIRS database. Prior to reading the article the teacher will provide each student with 2 different colored highlighters or pens. As students read, they should highlight information that supports school dress codes in one color and highlight information in a second color that opposes school dress codes. After reading is complete, students should have a visual of pro and con support. A teacher-led discussion should follow where each support piece is evaluated for its effectiveness. Finally, teacher and students should determine how fairly the author's opinion of school dress codes is presented.

The teacher should place students in small groups and provide each group with a folder containing a series of appropriate magazine advertisements. To begin have students determine the opinion of the product presented in the advertisement. Next have them determine how the advertisement supports that opinion. Finally have students compile a series of questions they may have about the product. Next, the teacher should select several of the advertisements for a whole class discussion about the effectiveness of the advertisements and what kind of balance of information, if any, was apparent in its presentation. This procedure can be extended in further sessions to include texts with denser print.

The teacher should supply students with a current newspaper article and editorial about the same topic. The SIRS database is a possible resource for these passages. After reading both selections, students should analyze both passages. For the newspaper article, students should list all pertinent facts about the topic. For the editorial, students should note the author's opinion and all evidence used to support his/her opinion. Next, students should note any factual information from the newspaper article, which also appeared in the editorial. Finally, both passages should be reviewed side-by-side to determine that the newspaper article is free of opinion while the editorial should show definite opinion. To extend this activity, teacher and students could focus solely on the editorial to determine if the support for the author's opinion is biased or balanced.

To determine if an author's argument is clear, the teacher should model the reading aloud of an informational passage asking pertinent questions of him/herself as the reading

progresses. The teacher should ask questions such as "What does the author believe about \_\_\_\_\_?" "How do I know the author believes \_\_\_\_\_?" or "Why is this detail included in the text?" As the reading continues, the teacher or a student recorder can list both questions and answers. At the conclusion of the reading, both teacher and students should look at the recorded answers to make a determination about the clarity of the author's argument and thought processes. To extend this activity, students should reread the article focusing on those answers to the question "How do I know the author believes \_\_\_\_\_?" and review that information for balance to determine if an opposing view is presented and how the presence of that opposing view can create a more reliable resource.

## Clarification

### Reading Grade 3 Indicator 2.A.6

To show proficiency of **critical evaluation of informational text**, a reader must form a number of judgments about a text. To begin this process a reader must preview the text and its features and combine that information with prior knowledge to set a purpose for reading. During and after reading, the evaluation of informational text requires a reader to **determine the content of the text, the role of text features, text elements that make that text a reliable source, the author's opinion, argument, or position, the effectiveness and purpose of the author's word choice, and the effectiveness of the author's style**. A full evaluation of an informational text requires attention to each of these elements.

To begin a critical evaluation of informational text, a reader must use prior knowledge and preview the text to establish a purpose for reading. Once a purpose is established, that is followed by a close reading of the text. Next, a reader must judge how well the text provides information for the stated purpose for reading. Then a critical reader should be able to verbalize or scribe an explanation or analysis of the text by focusing on specific sections of that text and detailing how that **information meets or does not meet a stated purpose for reading**.

If that purpose is not met, a critical reader should be able to **identify those pieces of information that are needed to fully construct meaning**. Additional information may include more details within the text, more text features, or adjustments to the organizational pattern or existing text features. To determine what is required for meaning, a critical reader should closely read the existing text and then assess the degree to which the text meets a reader's purpose. A reader should note particularly the organizational pattern of the text and see how well that pattern helps a reader construct meanings from important ideas in the text. Those gaps in information that make it difficult for a reader to construct meaning signal the types of additional information that are needed.

The **analysis of informational text for reliability** is an important aspect in the text's critical evaluation. A reader must first discern how much of the text is factual. Once the factual information is isolated, judgments about its accuracy are necessary. A reader should access information about the author and his/her credentials as a means of assessing the passage's reliability. Depending upon the subject of the text and how current the information is also a reliability factor. When available, a reader can access other texts on the same subject to see if there is a consistency in the information. Finally after looking at multiple texts on the same subject, a reader can determine if the initial text contains the same information as the subsequent texts or if the initial text presents information not contained in the others. A discrepancy in information could point to an inaccuracy in a text or to a more current source of information.

Once reliability has been established, a reader should carefully note elements of text that address the **author's argument or produce clarity of the author's position on the topic**. Additionally, a reader should be attuned to **elements of bias** in the author's presentation of material. After reading is complete, a reader must implicitly understand the stated or implied main idea of the text. From that basis of understanding, a reader should look at the construction of the author's argument, noting any evidence of bias in the argument and looking for a fair treatment of opposing views on the topic. At that juncture a reader should be able to judge the impartiality of the material or the inclination of the author to present a single view of the topic. Based on that text evidence, a reader can make a critical decision about the text's fullness or limits of use to him/herself.

After a reader knows how useful a text might be, a determination can be made about what **additional information could help a reader construct meaning from the text**. Active reading skills will allow a reader to note a stated or implied main idea in the text. Then a reader can identify additional information that would add to, clarify, or strengthen their understanding of the text or the author's viewpoint. A reader's suggestions for additional information could include, but not be limited to

- Text features such as bulleted lists, captions, graphics, italicized or bold print etc.
- Information to address readers' questions that were not answered in the text
- Context clues, footnotes, or glossed words to help a reader understand unfamiliar words and phrases

A critical evaluation of a text also demands that a reader detect **words that authors use to affect a reader's feelings**. A critical reader can determine a reason for the author's word choice and the response the author wished to evoke. At the center of any persuasive text is a strong opinion, and authors use words to their advantage to create a strong emotional appeal to a reader. Repetition, rhetorical questions, hyperbole etc...all have the power to sway a reader's perceptions. A critical reader is aware of the power of words and examines this word choice to discern the author's tone. For example, a critical reader should be able to discern the difference in tone between "The hero was brave as he flew into the battle alone." from "The pilot was foolhardy flying into battle without cover." A critical reader must also note the portion of text where repetitions occur and determine why an author would wish to draw attention to that portion of text. Critical readers are aware of these elements and should be able to determine if they enhance an author's viewpoint. Finally critical readers should isolate elements that are used purely for emotional appeal and are not supported by fact.

Ultimately a critical reader should be able to **analyze an author's style** which is how an author uses language to relay ideas. An author's particular style has a direct effect upon the meaning of a text. For example, authors may use formal language to convey the seriousness of material or informal language to address the entertainment value of a topic. Or an author may use an informal style with a serious topic to evoke a particular response and cause a critical reader to consider why an author would not match style to topic. That disconnect between style and topic has a critical effect upon construction of meaning. A critical reader should also note how the author forms and uses sentences. The constant use of long, involved sentences or short, choppy sentences or a combination of both can alert a reader to a variety of emphases within a text. An author might use this stylistic formula to draw attention to a particular idea or to diminish the effect of an idea. Using sentence fragments is another way authors can achieve those same effects. Finally a critical reader should be aware that how the author uses language, makes choices about words, and constructs sentences that are planned so that a critical reader can develop insight into the author's intended meaning of a text.